Hazardous Weather Around Water Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Understanding the high stakes involved in hazardous weather around water emphasizes the importance of being proactive, prepared, and informed. By taking appropriate precautions, following safety guidelines, and staying vigilant during severe weather conditions, can help mitigate the risks and protect lives, property, and the well-being of our communities.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

DAMAGE CAUSED BY HAZARDOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS AROUND WATER

- **Human Lives:** The most critical factor at stake in hazardous weather around water is human lives. Severe weather events can result in tragic fatalities due to drowning, electrocution, or other water-related accidents.
- **Rescuers and Responders:** Hazardous weather conditions place not only those directly exposed to danger at risk but also the rescuers and responders who are called upon to save lives.
- **Property and Infrastructure:** Severe weather, including heavy rainfall and flooding, can cause extensive damage to waterfront properties, infrastructure, and coastal areas.
- **Environmental Impact:** Hazardous weather conditions can have adverse effects on the environment, including water bodies and marine ecosystems. Storm surges, increased runoff, and pollutants carried by floodwaters can harm aquatic life, habitats, and water quality.
- **Economic Consequences:** The impact of hazardous weather around water extends to economic sectors dependent on maritime activities, such as fishing, shipping, tourism, and coastal industries. Disruptions in operations, damage to

vessels, or loss of infrastructure can lead to significant economic losses.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

BEST SAFETY MEASURES IN HAZARDOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS AROUND WATER

1. **Stay Informed:** Monitor weather forecasts, advisories, and warnings issued by reliable sources such as meteorological agencies or local authorities.
2. **Plan Ahead:** If you anticipate hazardous weather, have a safety plan in place. Identify safe shelter locations, evacuation routes, and emergency contacts. Communicate your plan with others who may be with you or affected by the weather conditions.
3. **Seek Safe Shelter:** When hazardous weather approaches, seek shelter in sturdy buildings or designated storm shelters. Avoid temporary structures or open areas near the water that are vulnerable to high winds or flooding.
4. **Lightning Safety:** If thunderstorms are present, avoid being in or near water. Seek shelter indoors or in a hard-top vehicle. If you are caught outside with no immediate shelter available, crouch down low with your feet together, minimizing contact with the ground.
5. **Boating Safety:** If you are boating, closely monitor weather conditions and heed all warnings. If adverse weather is imminent, seek shelter onshore as soon as possible. Always wear a life jacket and ensure that all passengers do the same. Always maintain communication with shore authorities.
6. **Swimming with Caution:** Avoid swimming in open water during hazardous weather conditions, including thunderstorms or when there are high waves or strong currents.
7. **Stay Away from Flooded Areas:** Avoid walking or driving through flooded areas, as water depth and current strength can be deceiving. Swift-moving water can sweep you off your feet, and submerged objects can cause injuries or entanglement.
8. **Be Prepared with Safety Equipment:** Keep essential safety equipment readily available, including life jackets,

whistles, flashlights, and first aid kits. Ensure that equipment is in good working condition and accessible.

9. **Stay Clear of Waterborne Debris:** During hazardous weather conditions, floating debris can be present in the water. Avoid contact with debris to prevent injuries or entanglement.
10. **Follow Evacuation Orders:** If local authorities issue evacuation orders, follow them promptly and move to higher ground or safer locations. Do not delay or underestimate the severity of the situation.
11. **Stay Calm and Maintain Communication:** During hazardous weather conditions, it is crucial to stay calm.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO WORK SAFELY AROUND WATER IN HAZARDOUS WEATHER

- **Develop a Safety Policy:** Establish a comprehensive safety policy.
- **Conduct Risk Assessments:** Perform regular risk assessments to identify potential hazards.
- **Training and Education:** Provide employees with appropriate training on working safely around water.
- **Establish Communication Protocols:** Maintain clear communication channels between workers, supervisors, and designated safety personnel.
- **Weather Monitoring:** Continuously monitor weather conditions using reliable sources of information. Utilize weather monitoring systems, such as weather apps, radios, or dedicated weather monitoring services.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Develop and implement emergency preparedness plans specific to working around water during hazardous weather. Regularly conduct drills to ensure familiarity with emergency protocols.
- **Use Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Provide workers with suitable PPE based on the identified hazards and weather conditions.
- **Secure Equipment and Tools:** Ensure that all equipment, tools, and materials are properly secured and stored.
- **Restrict Access to Hazardous Areas:** Establish restricted

zones or barriers around areas with increased risks during hazardous weather, such as locations prone to flooding, strong currents, or falling objects.

- **Monitor Water Levels and Currents:** Stay informed about water levels, tides, and currents work areas.
- **Have a Buddy System:** Implement a buddy system where workers are paired up to watch out for each other’s safety. Encourage regular check-ins and communication between buddies.
- **Review and Learn from Incidents:** Establish a process for reviewing and learning from any incidents or near-misses related to working around water during hazardous weather.

FINAL WORD

Understand the risks involved, monitor weather forecasts, seek shelter, and follow safety guidelines to minimize the dangers and protect ourselves and those around us.